

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02456 211603Z

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7339

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FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, PFOR

SUBJECT: DAMASCUS CU PROGRAMS FOR BALANCE FY 1976

REF: STATE 93778,

1. I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH IMPLICATIONS OF REFTEL. DEPT HAS KNOWN SINCE FY 74 OF DAMASCUS REQUIREMENTS FOR SHORT-TERM LECTURERS. ORIGINALLY REQUESTED LEVEL FOR THIS PROGRAM YEAR WAS SIX LECTURERS, REDUCED LATER BY THE DEPARTMENT TO FIVE, REDUCED SUBSEQUENTLY BY THE DEPARTMENT TO FOUR. AS IT HAS EVOLVED, ONLY THREE SPEAKERS HAVE REACHED DAMASCUS AND ONE IS PRESUMABLY ON TRACK FOR THE TRANSITION QUARTER. I CANNOT, THEREFORE, UNDERSTAND HOW "HIGHER THAN ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF AMERICAN SPECIALISTS" FOR OUR PROGRAM COULD HAVE EXHAUSTED OUR COUNTRY ALLOTMENT.

2. TOO, DEPARTMENT WELL AWARE THAT EMBASSY HAS BEEN MOVING AHEAD WITH CONTACTS WITH MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND THE EUPHRATES DAM AND AIDES FOR IV PROGRAMS THIS FY (STATE 278906 - 1975). EMBASSY HAS ALREADY RECEIVED ACCEPTANCE FROM KAHALE, EXPECTS ACCEPTANCE SHORTLY FROM ABU OMAR. I NEED NOT DETAIL THE POTENTIAL HARM THAT COULD ARISE IF WE WITHDRAW EITHER INVITATION AT THIS STAGE.

3. BEYOND THIS FISCAL YEAR'S PROBLEMS, MOREOVER, REFTEL RAISES FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS ABOUT CU SUPPORT FOR SYRIA. ALTHOUGH NO SPECIFIC ALLOCATION FIGURE WAS EVER PROVIDED TO US, DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO CU-PORTION OF COUNTRY PLAN (STATE A-5760 - 1975) EST-
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ABLISHED IN OUR MINDS GENERAL PARAMETERS OF COUNTRY PROGRAM. I

WAS ALSO ASSURED DURING MY WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS WITH CU THAT FUNDING WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FOR MAJOR PROJECTS OUTLINED IN OUR COUNTRY PLAN. TO BE SURE IN MY OWN MIND THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO MISUNDERSTANDING, I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE BY RETURN CABLE A REPORT OF THE ORIGINAL FY 1976 CU ALLOCATION FOR SYRIA, ANY AMENDMENT TO THIS FIGURE, AND WHAT EXPENSES HAVE BEEN OBLIGATED AGAINST THIS ALLOCATION.

4. OUR PLANS FOR THE BALANCE OF THE FISCAL YEAR (INCLUDING TRANSITION PERIOD) INCLUDE ONE ADDITIONAL AMSPEC (LAWRENCE), FOUR FUL

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR GRANTS (KAHALE, ABU OMAR AND THEIR AIDES), AND ONE GRADUATE STUDENT GRANT (AL-WAER).

5. FOR FUTURE PLANNING, WE BELIEVE SYRIAN INITIATIVE ON CULTURAL AGREEMENT IS INDICATION THAT SARG POLICIES FINALLY COMING INTO LINE WITH WELL-DOCUMENTED DESIRE BY SYRIAN ACADEMICIANS, SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICIANS FOR VASTLY GREATER EXCHANGE WITH U.S. RECTOR OF DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD ME THIS WEEK DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY WILL NEED AT LEAST 20 SHORT TERM LECTURERS IN VARIOUS FACULTIES NEXT YEAR TO HELP ESTABLISH NEW GRADUATE PROGRAMS, AND THAT IMPROVING CLIMATE FOR US/SARG EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE ASSURED ACCEPTANCE OF LARGER US INVOLVEMENT AT UNIVERSITY.

MURPHY

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